

## THE NEW METROPOLITAN BUILDING ACT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

SIR,—It must be highly gratifying to all classes of persons connected with building pursuits, that the legislature have determined to bring in a new Building Act for the metropolis; an opportunity now offers enabling parties to suggest such improvements as experience and practice must enable many to point out. The new Bill contains many excellent provisions, and will be a great benefit to the inhabitants of crowded neighbourhoods.

Inclosed I send you a copy of my petition, stating facts which occurred in my practice; and as, owing to defects in the old Building Act, parties have been put to enormous costs by litigation, my object is to obtain a clause to prevent a similar waste of money for the future.

Wishing every success to your really useful publication, I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

EDWARD W. GARBETT.

COPY OF LETTER TO MR. DUNCOMBE.

London, 26th April, 1843.

SIR,—I shall esteem it a great favour if you will present the inclosed petition on the Building Act to the House of Commons. The Bill appears to me very defective in many important particulars, and cannot fail, if passed in its present state, of leading to constant litigation. As I did not obtain a copy of the Bill till to-day, of course my petition is hastily drawn up.

I have taken this liberty in consequence of having much business in the Borough of Finsbury, and lately becoming a resident in this neighbourhood.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

EDWARD W. GARBETT.

To T. S. Duncombe, Esq., M.P., &amp;c. &amp;c.

MR. DUNCOMBE'S ANSWER.

The Albany, April 29th, 1843.

SIR,—I beg leave to inform you that I presented to the House of Commons yesterday evening the petition which you did me the honour to transmit to me for that purpose.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

THOS. S. DUNCOMBE.

E. W. Garbett, Esq.

(Copy.)

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The humble Petition of Edward William Garbett, Architect.

Sheweth:—That your petitioner finds it provided in the Bill "For the better regulating Buildings of the Metropolitan Districts, and to provide for the Drainage thereof;" that drains shall be built and made good into the common sewer of any one within one hundred feet, for every house or other building before the walls thereof shall be carried higher than ten feet.

That in houses and buildings in the districts comprised within the scope of the said bill, it often happens that drains, in running to the nearest common sewer, pass through and under the houses, buildings, or land of other persons, and frequently become obstructed or out of repair in such other persons' premises; or drains might readily be made to communicate with drains of the premises of such other persons whose drains do communicate with a common sewer; but inasmuch as no power now exists for a person to enter the premises or lands of another, the owners thereof frequently refuse to cleanse and repair their drains, or to allow adjoining owners to enter upon their premises to cleanse, repair, or to make and construct new ones, your petitioner is of opinion that if some compulsory measures were to be provided by the said bill for enforcing the same, it would tend greatly to facilitate the better drainage of the said districts.

That in the city of London there are numerous old party-walls, built under the 18th and 19th, and 22nd and 23rd of Charles the Second (after the great fire of London), half built on the land of each adjoining owner, of the proper thickness of party-walls, but with windows in the same, overlooking and abutting the premises of other persons, as was allowed by the said Acts, and that for the want of the origin of the same being understood, all such walls are treated by surveyors of the present day as external walls belonging to the party whose premises such windows serve to light, and on rebuilding any such walls, such parties claim the right of reinstating such windows as ancient lights, and rebuilding the same as external walls.

That disputes frequently arise in building and rebuilding houses and premises respecting the same and for want of the due setting out of the site for party walls, party fence walls, and external walls, and it was provided by the said Acts of

Charles the Second that district surveyors should attend to the due setting out of such sites, the half on the land of each party, and for the compelling parties to build party walls, the one-half on the land of each party, to be raised by the first beginner; and for want of such provisions in the Building Act now in force, disputes also between adjoining owners now constantly arise.

Your petitioner therefore humbly prays that it may be enacted, that persons may enter the lands, houses, and premises of adjoining property to cleanse, repair old, or to make new drains, to communicate with the nearest common sewer; that between house and other buildings or lands there shall be party walls built, half on the lands of each party, to be raised by the first builder, as provided for by the said Acts, and if desired by the adjoining owner, chimneys built therein, or in the adjoining side, to be set up by the surveyor of the district.

That no window or other openings may be made in any newly-erected party wall, party fence, or external wall, and that all windows in party walls, party fence, or external walls abutting on the lands of another which have not existed for six years may be stopped up (except they were made with the consent in writing of the adjoining freeholder); that all ancient windows in party, party fence, or external walls may be hooded up with metal so as not to prevent the light descending through the same, but so as to prevent the overlooking or the commission of nuisances to adjoining premises, and for the better security against fire.

And your petitioner will ever pray, &c.

EDWARD WILLIAM GARBETT.

## ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH.

THIS church is now very nearly completed; so that a judgment may fairly be passed upon it as a whole. And we deeply regret that so miserable and meagre a specimen of modern church building should ever have been substituted for an ancient parish church in the very heart of our University. The inside could hardly have been worse, if the object of the architect had been to make every thing in it as incorrect and unchurchlike as he possibly could. The walls enclose a nearly square space, and are occupied on three sides by prodigious tiers of deal galleries, intercepting the windows of the aisles midway, and causing those at the east end to be partly blocked with bricks. There are very lofty pillars and very flat arches, exactly reversing the ancient rules of architecture; and behind these pseudo-piers (for they are of cast-iron) stand small parasitical props of the same material, supporting the beams of the galleries. The roof is ceiled, but has some deal planks (they are not timbers), in the shape of ties and collars, exposed. The pagan mural tablets, taken from the old church, have already been stuck up like so many marble blisters all over the interior of the new one. With all the worst features and details of a cheap church, this building has some attempts at external ornaments in the shape of a few disproportioned gargoyles and pinnacles. All the windows have the execrable fault, indeed the positive architectural solecism, of not being foliated under the transoms; and the mullions and tracery stand so nearly flush with the wall, that they have a most poor and unsatisfactory effect. In the northern face of the western tower is a huge four-centered doorway, or rather portal, which, we need hardly say, is totally without authority. The same may be said of the doors near the eastern end. We had some hopes, while this church was half-built, that it might prove, in some degree, worthy of the name; but the internal arrangements are so repulsive, that it has lost almost all claim to the title. It is really distressing to think that so much money has recently been spent in erecting, in Cambridge, three of the worst new churches, perhaps, anywhere to be seen, when architects could easily have been found who, with the same funds, would have erected correct and churchlike designs of equal size.—*The Ecclesiologist*.

The foregoing species of criticism is of that arbitrary character that enables the reader to determine nothing, but that the church does not square with some standard which the writer sets up—a standard of copyism as well as of criticism. We dare say the great fault is, that the architect (whom we believe to be Mr. Poynder) has given occasion to be tried by this standard, by making his work amenable to it; neither venturing boldly, on the one hand, to translate freely, nor, on the other hand, being subservient enough to make a slavish copy. We think the criticism very illogical; but we have no time for a special notice of the subject, and shall have our views to propound in the whole treatment of the question of architectural propriety. By the way, we should

like to put two questions to the Camden Societies; first, what do they think the medieval architects would have done with cast-iron had they been masters, like ourselves, in the art of its manufacture? And second, as we have heard so much of the appropriateness of steep pitched roofs for our northern climate, and so much stickling for propriety, we should like to know what sort of roof and what style the Camden Society and their architect have fixed on as appropriate to Jerusalem, as we understand they have prepared designs for the proposed new Protestant church there?

## FRESCO PAINTING.

THE noble style of adorning churches, halls, and palaces, called "fresco," which is now about to be again naturalised in England under the auspices of her Majesty Queen Victoria, Prince Albert, and the Government, was not unknown in the days of the Plantagenets and the Tudors, down to the eighth Henry, in the latter part of whose reign a total stop was put to this mode of decorating ecclesiastical edifices, and, in its stead, lime-wash was introduced, together with the mop and pail, to purify the walls of churches and chapels from the presence of the saints, kings, and queens, and scriptural paintings with which they were adorned; and extensively did the sweeping activity of those three practical agents obliterate the productions of the pencil, guided as it had been by intellectual power in various degrees. Some remnants of those works of early English genius and good taste did however escape, to give evidence of the barbarous spirit by which their fellows had been wantonly consigned to oblivion. "The Painted Chamber," Council Chamber, and St. Stephen's Chapel Royal of the ancient Palace of Westminster, did not suffer the penalty of the mop and pail—their pictorial riches were merely covered with wainscot-board, which kept the obnoxious paintings sufficiently out of sight for a couple of centuries; but in 1818 and six following years, great alteration being found requisite for the convenience of parliamentary business, the hidden treasures of the graphic art were discovered by Mr. Adam Lee, who was clerk of works for that department under the Board of Public Works. Mr. Lee made this discovery very known, and the Antiquarian Society employed the late Mr. Stothard, R.A., to copy several of them, which were published in the transactions of that society. Mr. Lee made copies of all of them, which we believe he still has in his possession, and they afford undeniable evidence of the style of fresco painting which had been largely employed in the old palace nearly 500 years ago. Westminster Hall, however, which was completed by Richard II., never was painted (except the statues of the kings and queens that adorn the niches); the surface of the wall was only trowelled in the ordinary manner, without being coated with stucco. That great hall was hung with tapestry; the subjects were chiefly taken from the descriptions of the crusades, and particularly from "The Siege of Antioch." When removed from the hall, preparatory to the trial of Charles I., these "arras" were put up in the rooms then remaining of the ancient palace; long after which they were taken down, rolled up, and put into the cellars under the House of Lords, where they remained until the coronation of George IV., when they were found, taken out, unrolled, and displayed great freshness of colour and durability of texture. A servant, we believe, of Lord Gwydyr (then Lord Chamberlain) took a fancy to some of it, and was taken before a magistrate, with the *muner* in possession. The rest of the magnificent remains were again consigned to the cellars; but some time before the conflagration of the houses, were disinterred and sold by some nobody for 10*l.* to the theatres.

A splendid hotel is in the course of erection at the terminus at Colchester, and will be opened in about two months. It is designed in the pure Italian style, by Mr. Lewis Cubitt, and the builders are Messrs. Grisell and Peto. Tastefully laid out gardens will be attached, which, with the hotel, will cover about an acre and a half of ground. Mr. Osborne, the brewer, of Colchester, is, we understand, the proprietor; but we are not positively informed by whom the hotel will be occupied.